

TAG is excited to welcome our new college access provider, Mr. Gerardo Padierna. Mr. Padierna will assist students with college applications, exploring colleges, and finding internships.

**Excerpt from TAG Inklings, November 2017 Issue:**

Delta Smith, a TAG senior, interviewed Mr. Padierna for our school publication, Inklings. The interview is below:

For this issue, we decided to interview our new college advisor, Mr. Padierna. He is a TAG graduate, so he has a very clear idea of the necessities for success both at TAG and college. If you have any ideas on specific people we should interview for future issues, or a certain profession you would like us to publish, please let us know!

Delta: Can you give us a brief explanation of your role at TAG?

Padierna: So, I am going to be a college and career counselor for you guys. Pretty much I'm going to be supporting Ms. Marberry and whatever initiative she has. I am going to be working with LAW also, so I will be supporting Mr. Flores and the counseling department as well.

D: Where did you grow up?

P: I am from Dallas. I was born and raised in Oak Cliff, and I live there now, and will probably live there forever.

D: And what is your family like (growing up and now)?

P: I have 5 brothers and sisters, and 2 parents. We were always really close. My parents are from Mexico, so we are all first-generation Americans. We are the first to speak English, the first to go to school, and the first people to do other things like that.

D: When you were in high school, what did you think you wanted your career to be?

P: When I was in high school and I was a junior and senior, I really wanted to major in art. So, I would do a lot of the ceramic art here in the art room, back when we had Mr. Beck. He was one of the teachers we had here. And I was really into sculpture and ceramics. So I saw myself as an artist.

D: So what were some of your other interests in high school?

P: I liked math. I mean I really liked everything, so I can't say that I disliked one subject in particular, but I guess I did lean more towards the mathy side, and physics side.

D: Where did you go to college?

P: I went to SMU.

D: And what did you study?

P: I studied electrical engineering and math. So I got 2 degrees there.

D: Did you ever study abroad or consider studying abroad?

P: I did consider studying abroad, but because of the curriculum, it wasn't going to be beneficial for me, so I never did it. But it would have been really cool to.

D: What did you do before you started working at TAG?

P: Before I started working at TAG, I did a lot of stuff. I worked with the Mayor's Internship Program in conjunction with EIF, and with a lot of the more underserved schools in DISD. I also had a little IT [Information Technology] stint for a little bit.

D: Why did you choose to work at TAG?

P: Well, I had the option of moving or staying from where I am now, and TAG needed a

college access provider, and one of the reasons I stayed was because I wanted to work at TAG. It was a good reason to stay.

D: What are you most excited for about working here?

P: I'm really excited to see what I can contribute to you guys, because I know it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what you need, and you guys have so many great things that you already have. So it will be exciting to see what I can contribute and help you improve on.

D: What are some tips for students who want to major in electrical engineering?

P: Tip #1: Make sure that you are dedicated and that you are focused, because it can get really hard really fast, and if you don't focus you are going to fail. Simple as that. You will not succeed if you are not driven and if you aren't goal-oriented, it's not going to work out for you well.

D: Just to clarify, how did you go from majoring in electrical engineering to being a college advisor?

P: When I was in college, I had jobs on campus. I worked for SMU's IT department, but that's not enough to pay the bills. So, you get other jobs, and my first job was working at Lincoln High School because they needed help there, and from the school they recruit people there to work at different non-profit organizations in Dallas. But the school sponsors students to be able to work at these different places, so I ended up getting a job through there, and that is how I ended up here.

D: And what are some tips you have for seniors going off to college?

P: Take the time that you have at TAG and really cherish it and value it because it is really special. And even though you might have all these difficult things going on, and you might have these little problems going on with classmates, but really cherish it because TAG is a really special place, and college is going to be very different. It's going to be a culture shock for some students, and it's going to be an intellectual shock. So just prepare yourself to reminisce on how good TAG was, because it's a great place. Everything is really great here, so really just soak it in while you are here.

D: What is a life lesson that you have learned that you would like to share with the students at TAG?

P: The biggest thing I've learned is when you face an obstacle, keep moving forward. No matter what it is. If you fail a class, if you find yourself in a difficult familial situation, develop the mental toughness to keep pushing through whatever it may be. My biggest life lesson is that you need to grow a little bit of thick skin.

D: Do you have anything else you would like to add?

P: I'm very excited to be working with TAG students. I know y'all are pretty eccentric and really involved and focused on what you want to do, and I'm excited to see what you will be working on, especially for thesis because I've heard some interesting projects.